

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-12, 14-16 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. The Examiner's position is that the term "steep" is a relative term which renders the claims indefinite.

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the interview granted to Applicants' representative, Marc A. Rossi, on January 24, 2007. During the interview, Applicants' representative pointed out that the claim language clearly defines what is meant by the term "steep" thermal gradient, namely, a thermal gradient that protects all but the immediately vaporizing material from the temperature in the second region. One skilled in the art would clearly understand the meaning of the term steep given the language in the claim and the supporting specification.

The Examiner stated he would meet with the Supervisory Patent Examiner (SPE) to review the rejection and telephone Applicants' representative to provide a summary of the meeting. Having failed to hear from the Examiner, Applicants' representative contacted the Examiner by telephone to determine if the final rejection would be withdrawn. The Examiner indicated he had not been able to review the case with the SPE, but he would attempt to review the case with another Primary Examiner. Applicants' representative subsequently received a telephone call from the Examiner indicating he had reviewed the case with a Primary Examiner. The Examiner indicated he and the Primary Examiner had determined that it would be necessary for Applicants to add a specific recitation in the claim with respect to the thermal gradient in order to define the term "steep".

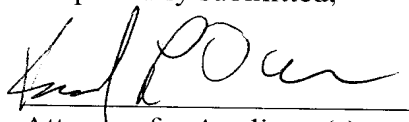
While Applicants do not agree with the Examiner's position with respect to the term "steep" as being indefinite, Applicants have amended the claims to further define the temperature gradient as proposed by the Examiner in order to expedite the allowance of this case. The Examiner indicated that he would enter the above amendment, absent a finding of any new prior art, without requiring the Applicants to file an RCE.

Applicants' representative would also like to note the Examiner's comment on the Interview Summary Record with respect to JP'864 is incorrect.

Applicants' representative did not assert that "powder" is different from the claimed invention. Indeed, the claimed invention can be practiced with powered materials. Instead, Applicants' representative asserted that the structure and method disclosed in JP '864 were so far removed from the claimed invention that it was difficult to discuss the concept of temperature gradient as claimed with respect to the reference.

In view of the above, all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance, notice of which is respectfully urged.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ray Owens", written over a horizontal line.

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If the Examiner is unable to reach the Applicant(s) Attorney at the telephone number provided, the Examiner is requested to communicate with Eastman Kodak Company Patent Operations at (585) 477-4656.